DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 197 013 UD 021 109

AUTHOR Hyett, Barbara Helfgott, Ed.
TITLE Black Walnuts/Nueces Negras. Poems by Children.
INSTITUTION TryArts, Boston, Mass.
SPONS AGENCY Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, Boston.: Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 79p.: For related documents see UD 021 108 and UD 021 112. Photographs may not reproduce clearly.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Children: Compensatory Education: Creative Expression: *Creative Writing: Elementary Education: *Poetry: School Desegregation: Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS Emergency School Aid Act 1972: Massachusetts (Boston)

ABSTRACT

The poems in this anthology were written by elementary school students in the James A. Garfield School in Boston, Massachusetts. The students were participants in a Federally funded special arts project, TryArts, which sought to stimulate self-expression by exposing children to professional artists and performers and by involving them in the creative process. The children whose poems appear in this anthology worked with Barbara Helfgott Hyett, TryArts poet-in-residence. (MK)

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ED197013

Black Walnuts
Nueces Negras

Poems by Children

Winter - Spring 1980

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Francisco Mendez Diaz

James A. Garfield School
Boston, Massachusetts

UD021109

Edited by Barbara Helfgott Hyett
TryArts Poet-in-Residence 1980

Harvest time, For Black walnuts.

JACQUELINE REPTA
AGE 9

Black Walnut

I'll bet if I cracked it open
a little walnut would come out
and then
I could crack that one open,
and so on, and so on....

Title: Submitted in judged contest
by Renata Cascao, grade 4

Cover Design: Francisco Mendez-Diez
TryArts Artist in Residence

TryArts is funded under the Federal Government's Emergency School Aid Act. The Project is designed to further interracial and intercultural understanding through the arts. The Cultural Education Collaborative, with assistance from the Artists Foundation, coordinates TryArts for the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities. For more information about the project contact the Cultural Education Collaborative, 164 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON
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JAMES A. GARFIELD SCHOOL
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Photographs by

Lilian Kemp

and

Lynn Stephen

L. Kemp

Writing and re-writing go hand in hand. Barbara and Silvia proof-read a poem.

SILVIA PEREZ
AGE 11

When I Make Poems

When I write a poem I feel
like a little door, opening,
a big world coming
where anything is possible
and real.
When I write I feel
important. I feel proud.
If I'm lucky, I finish
and sometimes, people read it.

April, 1980

Poetry at the James A. Garfield School is a matter for the schoolyard, a pigeon on the chain-link fence, a child on the fire escape watching, writing down every move. Under the basketball hoop, a boy studies the building's bricks. On the cement stoop, a girl listens to the airplane sounds in her book. Someone else describes a gray sky until it's too cold to hold a pencil. Poems are made of what we know.

Inside the school, a bagful of black walnuts is a principal wonder. In classrooms, children hold nuts in their fists, let them fall, try to get inside. Kindergarteners hear the music of the humpedback whale, paint a mural, say the words for sea. First graders worry about lost mittens, collaborate on five stanzas from their desks. In the library during recess, a child writes her poem in the dark. In the hallway two boys discuss love and memory, hands and stones. In the cafeteria, fourth and fifth graders eat kiwi fruit and onions. On the stage of the all-purpose room, twelve children, the core group, build and string dulcimers, then write and play the blues.

From song to sestina, the children, their teachers, parents, grandparents, whole families made poems of their lives. Spanish and English came together in the lines of the same verse. Language easily translated itself from one tongue to another. In every room, children read and heard the rhythms of the great poets, the work that came before theirs. They understood tradition, learned how high to reach.

For three months, everyone wrote poems. Some worked together for four hours a week, some met the "poem lady" only three times. Every child touched the feathers of the purple boa "inspiration," and filled her basket with ideas, the words clear and truthful, a poetry of place, the homes of Brighton, Jamaica Plain and Roxbury, the halls of a city school.

This poetry is as rare as the black walnut, the shell dark and irregular, the kernal sweet, like the voice of a child, resonating with its own importance.

Barbara Helfgott Hyett

Barbara Helfgott Hyett
TryArts Poet-in-Residence

JESSIE KNIGHT
AGE 10

Poem

Deep as a fat pencil
Not soft at all
A big black walnut
   a rock
A black walnut
A black walnut
A black walnut tree
Another country
A big black walnut.

Selected Poems by the Core Group

NATHLINE AVINGER
Age 10

My Self

I am Nathline Paulette Avinger.
I am a native American Cherokee
and my mother's mother and father
are Portuguese.
My father's father and mother
are Black
my mother is brown skinned.
My father is brown skinned, like my hand.
My sisters are light skinned too.
My brother, my brother is bright
and I get anything I want.
I'm not the baby but I have
a baby sister. My mother
spoils her too. She spoils
all her kids. My mother
has a twin brother
who looks like her. My mother
has 14 brothers and sisters.
My sister has two boys who
are bright. My father
has 3 sisters and a brother.
Little Sister is nice to me.
I am Nathline Paulette Avinger.

Birds

I love birds, some blue like the sea,
pretty and sweet. Sing so nice,
I don't know why people kill them.
People kill ducks. I don't
think that is right. Birds
should have the same rights
as mankind. I would
not kill anything alive. People
should not kill.

NATHLINE AVINGER

Dolphins Are Very Smart

He will save someone.
He will pick them up on his back
and bring them up to shore.
Once, I saw something.
Two dolphins being killed.
I was mad,
blood all over the face.

Being in the Box

Jackie and I were in the box, rolling
in the box, curled up in a ball.
Michael and Craig turned us around
in the box and the box fell. Jackie
fell. I fell. Silvia came and got
in the box too. Three girls in the box.
I was in space going through stars,
near Mars and I felt hotter.

The Wind

The shivering wind
blows through my hair
freezing my hands, slowly,
the wind blows the leaves,
makes a sound like snoring
in bed, my face so cold,
turning red. Then the wind
brings the snow to my mouth.

JEFFREY CRANDELL
Age 10

L. Kemp

Jeffrey gets down to business while his thoughts are fresh.

Sal's Twilight

hot as a flame
or hot as the atomic raytheon
hitting the earth

Now

Sal's twilight
is gone.
But everytime it shone
there was no earth.
Sal's time has come.

JEFFREY CRANDELL

Dulcimer Music

Like hearing soft music with no strings,
sounds, like romantic evenings, silver
moonbeams reaching, reaching and it hits
earthcrust. In the morning it is gone.

Snips like an earthquake shaking,
rocks fall, houses crumble, waters rage,
a horrible sight. And now it's over
and the place is a mess.

Smoothing away, like brushing your teeth
but going in two directions, up and down
all around without a toothbrush, going
over each tooth. Use a file

to smooth down the rough part
and rinse with water
to wash away
the meat in your mouth.

Father's Day Off

My father takes me to Saint John's,
the same convent where the pope stayed.
The dog comes along. I play with the dog
on the hill. He runs and I follow and jump
on my Pa and knock him down.
We wrestle on the ground. We walk back,
hugging toward the car.
I climb on the trunk before he opens the door
and give him a smooch on the cheek.
When I kiss him my soul feels warm.

Cleaning up your Poems

JEFFREY CRANDELL

Jeffrey

Jeffrey tried to
Escape
From the
Freaks who
Ran after him and trapped him at the
End of the street. They caught him.
Yup, they did.

I Am On the Enemy Line

I am on the enemy line, spying
on the German base. I crawl
through the bushes, climb
under the window to the fire escape.
I have a gun. Inside, grownups
are helping old people
in the rest home.
Something moves and I shoot.

ANA HERNANDEZ
AGE 11

Outside Rumble

At the schoolyard fence, sticks look at me.
Starting out of the ground, growing bush
buds wiggle when the wind blows toward
the tree. The grass shakes the ground.
Rain falls to the ground, the grass
smells it and bumps out. Leaves
hit bottles and cans. An airplane
passes over the tree and into clouds,
then comes out rumbling sh--------z.
The car that was near the hopscotch goes
bro-o-o-o-m, z-z-z-oun-zz.
The house beside the tree has window
cracks. They put plastic over them.
Wind pushes against the window and waves,
like water waves and at the top, the tree
hits the roof. Wind pushes the clouds
so that they rain to the tree,
then onto the grass, to the ground
over the wall, dripping
on the schoolyard. There is ice
and a running like a river.

Dots

scared
throw
move
catch
tag
her
him
sting
hard
girl
boy

ANA HERNANDEZ

There Once Was A Queen

There once was a queen
that saw a wicked witch
that was so mean that
she cast a spell like a moose.
She was so ugly that
she looked like black lagoon
and all the other animals
were scared. The spell was only
for three days and then she
was a queen again. And everybody
was happy not to be scared.
Everybody believed in ghosts.

Trees

There were six trees.
Then a lot of men came
and cut the trees down. I saw
the way they cut it
with what looked like a wheel
with pointy edges,
spinning fast, like a cuckoo.

It had colorful leaves
Beautiful, I climbed it
and fell.

Simile

is a sort of trick,
a way of saying love
A butterfly is like a baby
is soft, little, a star
like an egg.

L. Stephen

Tina, Maria and Ana reflect upon poems about vegetables.

Feeling Free

The school is made of brick.
The windows are protected
by metal wire.
On the side of the school, black stairs
and writing. The whole school
is written on. The wall is painted too.
The fence is torn and some of it
is gone. A glass storm hit
the schoolyard. The basketball
backboard says: shoot for me.
The hoop bends down to black tar.

LEO KIRIAZIS
AGE 11

Sitting on the Fire Escape

The wind and the tires
are like a storm,
a hurricane coming soon,
the wheels of the car
trembling. The clouds
are black or changing
to black. The cold,
is like Alaska
if I close my eyes.

My Enemy

My enemy was in the way.
I got off my bike
and put up my fist. Then
I punched him in his lip.
Blood came squirting out.
He went running home.
Then his big sister came
and I said I was sorry.

Air Mail Magazine

I read six pages
about Buck Rogers in space.
I put on my mittens, my hat
over my hair and went outside
to tell my friends. We saw
six planes flying overhead.
So I sent away for
an air force tie from an ad
in the air mail magazine.

Small Tomatoes

Open me and I
am juicy, as juicy
as a watermelon
with seeds. Inside
I am red and orange,
like a cut basketball
with seeds. I wait
for someone to choose me.
I am going with a man.

Stringing A Dulcimer

The minute I stringed
my and Nathline's dulcimer
it made a nice smooth sound
like a man, a poor man
playing a harp
on the streetcorner,
waiting for people
to put money in
the blindman's can.

JESSIE KNIGHT
AGE 10

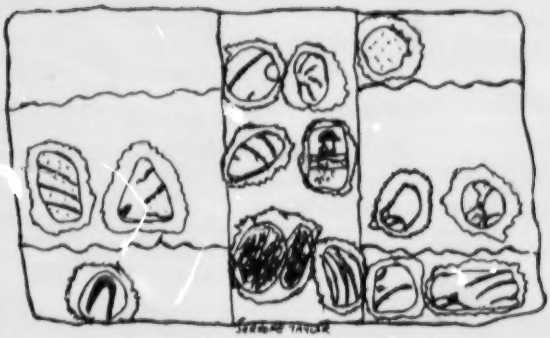
Soccer

When it's warm enough,
Tessie brings her orange ball
outside. She throws
it and I punch
and run to 2nd base.
Then the others send it home.

I punched the ball and made it home
tearing my foot on glass,
a piece of glass in the yard,
still running to base
the ball rolling in the grass,
my team coming back
with fury and punch.

On the Bus

When I was looking
out the window on the bus
I started to dream
that the kids on the bus
sitting by me in the seat
were waving their hands
in my face and I
wasn't paying attention at all.



Liquid Cherry

On my first bite, rain.
And after that, more rain
gooey chocolate, cherry juice
on my tongue, dripping,
sticking to my fingers,
sticking to my clothes.
And then it seemed like summer.
It will always seem like summer.

Observing the Weather

When I observed the weather,
I heard a squeaking sound.
Across the street, an old man
going into a house. Then
two cars with a squeaking noise
in the street. I heard birds
singing. The pole on the fence
started to wiggle and a gate
flew shut. And green came.

CRAIG MARSHALL
AGE 10

Poems

Chocolate Fudge

Covered with chocolate it tastes like chocolate caramel dark as the night making you want more so good so tasty.

Calm as the night it makes me feel happy.

The Sounds

The high and low sounds first,
very low sounds getting
higher and higher,
louder and louder, then
a very low sound,
then lower.
It stops.
It is quiet,
everyone
listening for it,
filled with joy.

Playing in a Box

Rolling, jumping-in, making lots
of noise, pound and push, we all fall in
and it breaks. We start wrestling
and the bottom comes off. We get out,
stand up the box, climb up the railing
and jump in, landing on each other's
stomachs with our arms.

Lies Are Easy

It is easy, like saying
you're a million years old
or saying that you're Superman,
a Martian from Jupiter
and you live on earth.
Lies can get you into trouble.
And lies can get you out.
When someone is looking
for someone to beat up,
and you're the kid he's looking for,
you can get out of trouble
by saying
your father's coming.

The Street

Watching the street sounds,
cars coming down the street,
the engine roar, snow landing
on my book. People walk by,
dogs come. Cars come by fast
or slow. It is quiet. Quiet.
It's cloudy dark over the houses.
I'm kneeling on the ground.
Trucks drive through. It is
silent in the schoolyard,
the bases, the marks on them.
2 on second, 1 on first,
3 on third h on home
Then an airplane sores,
making a sound.

SILVIA PEREZ
AGE 11

Skateboard Sestina

I was going down
the biggest hill.
I roll
and fall
and say: I have to oil the wheels.
I am lonely on the street.

There is a hole on the street.
I go down, down.
The oil is coming out of the wheels
and I am near the big hill
again, I fall
rolling.

A can is rolling
with me on the street,
then a rock falls
down
the hill
as if it, too, had wheels.

Something crashes, the wheels.
Nothing else rolls
with me on the hill.
I pass the whole street
and cry DOWN!
Of course, I fall.

I am sad that I still fall.
The wheels
have worn down.
They won't roll
on the street
or the hill.

I'm no longer lonely on the hill.
I've learned how to fall.
I know the street.
The wheels
take oil and roll.
Again, the hard way down.

I Was Playing With My Crayons

I was playing with my
crayons lining them
up, little ones first,
then I had an Idea.
I started to paint
animals: rabbits, dogs,
cat, crashing and hitting
each other, and I ran
to my pillow
and I prayed,

I want to be an artist
Again!

I would draw silence and peace.

My Father

My father is a great parent.
He helps in the house,
fixes mattresses, everything.
His name is Humberto
and he plays checkers
with me in the afternoon
when he comes back
from studying.

JACQUELINE REPTA
AGE 9

Last Monday

Last Monday I got a horse in the mail.
I was in the barn with my friend,
coloring with brown crayons in our ears.
He heard a song. We were eating cantalope,
just sitting there coloring, taking big bites
out of the cantelope, like eating the earth,
just sitting there on a stoop, daydreaming
and staring at the horse.

Dolphins Are Whales

When I went to Cape Cod
for my vacation
I went to a fabulous museum
and in one part
there was a dolphin show.
A guy in a bathing suit jumped off
a diving board into water.
He pretended to drown.
His face was under water.
His arms were wings.
A dolphin came beneath him.

The dolphin flew up out of the water
like a bird. All of the children
jumped in. I could not go in.
My father wouldn't let me.
Plus, I did not have
a bathing suit.

I Was Sorry

I was sorry when I broke my father's statue.
He is a fireman. It was a statue
of a fireman holding a little girl.
That day I did not talk to anyone.
But he said "it's all right."
Tears came down my eyes and he
wiped them for me.

Listen to the Ocean

Swish swash
whales are under there.
Boats are on the ocean.
Whales can talk
just like us.
They probably sing
the songs we know
When people say whales
are smart they don't mean
2 + 5 like that.
They know things
that we don't know.

Disappointment

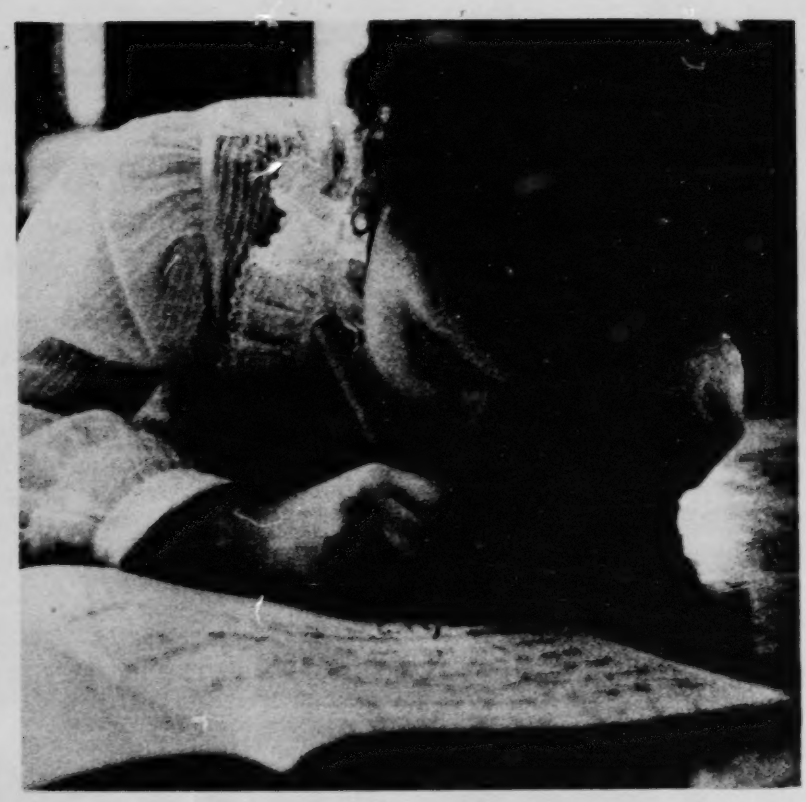
My mother and I
went to the movies
and when we got
there
the movie was
already gone.
All week my heart
had been set
on going.

MARIA RODRIGUEZ
AGE 10

Maria Olga

M aria is cute. When she puts on make up
A nd lip quencher, her cheeks turn dark
R ed. Her baby brother rubs
I t off with his fingers. He doesn't go to school where
A 's are good marks unless Maria forgets her homework.

O my God, I forgot, teacher.
L isten to directions better than that,
G irl, and take off that make up."
A nd then Maria's cheeks turn red for real.



L. Stephen

Maria captures the essence of a vegetable as she writes a poem in her notebook.

Kiwi Fruit

I am a key weed.
Squeeze me and I fall
apart. Juices come,
smelling like the grape.
I am squeezable.
Eat me and I'll be dead.
I'll be gone.

I Am A Stone

It is warm inside
the stone. I listen
to the river.
I am white and black
and when the animals
touch me I don't
feel and when
they sink me
I am flooded.

Every Saturday

Every Saturday we go to the movies
to see cartoons. And after
the English movies we go
to the Spanish one.
Last week, I went with my cousin
Margarita Santiago. We saw
"Jack and the Beanstalk"
and Maria was hungry. I was lucky
because I had money and my mother
and Margarita and I bought
soda and popcorn.

DIMITRA SIRAFOS
AGE 10

In Greece

The bakery store
had big machines.
You could see them make bread
and for coffee
they had a machine.
You push the button
and it's all done.

People walked in the street.
The sidewalk was so small
that if two people wanted to walk,
one would be in the street.
The street was dirt.
And we could make
things with it.
But one day my mother
said she didn't like
the weather
so we had to move.

During the Night

During the night
I wake and see the stars.
My back yard looks like forest
I think there is a bear.
The trees look like a witch
Raising her broom: saying Come to me,
Dimitra. Come.
Afterwards, my mother comes.
I jump back in my bed
and make believe
I'm sleeping alone.

Outside

Cars come in,
waves crunching on rocks
shooo
shooo
shooo

and they could move like snow.
The lunch mother comes
wearing her coat and hat.
The trees shake around the leaves
and scatter. The cars speed
down the street, sounding
whooo
whooo
whooo
an old woman looks at me
The tree shakes so fast
that the clouds are going
to blow away the wash.
A bird walks on the ice,
eats the ice.
A plane comes
bloom
bloom
bloom
and everyone tumbles up.

Watching Maria Eat Candy

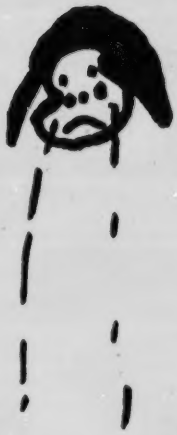
She put a chocolate in her hand,
taking little nibbles, watching
another girl eating, holding
the candy with two fingers.
When she finished, she held on
to the paper, real tight and laughing.

TINA TATE
AGE 9

The Blues

The Blues

How can you be
happy, how can you be
smiling, how can you be
anything
but low down saggy
rag bag baggy and blue?



Being Sad

I used to walk around
with a smile on my face.
But sometimes the smile
gets tired of standing up
I guess. That's the way
it is, day by day.

I Like to Love My Mother

I like to love my mother
while we are driving
in the car. I'm in the back
watching. My mom is beautiful
in the mirror.
She looks like the sun,
her hands look like
the moon and her hair,
the black night.

I know a woman named Joyce
She's as beautiful
as my mother, sitting here
with me at school, my mother
home, in my room,
hanging my clothes on the door.

Lord, I've Got Some Singin' To Do

Don't take me lord too soon
titi bump
My name is Tina
titi bump
I'm super bad
tidi bump
you mess with me
titi
I'll blow your mind
tidi
I met these boys
tidi bump
on a train
tidi bump
sweet thing I got their
number tidi bump
543 tidi bump
Love tidi bump tidi
bump Humdy dum hump hump
di dum shake your rump
di dum hump hump di dum.

I'm Somebody

I'm somebody
I think that I am
the only one who believes
in God.
I am black, a Native
American Indian who
speaks Spanish. I
was born in the year
of 1970.
I'm somebody,
a very intelligent child.
When I walk, the air
parts in front of me.
When I grow up
I will be a poet
because I am a poetry writer
now. I will be a poet.
I will be a poet. I will live
in Poetry Land.

MICHAEL WARE
AGE 11

Karate Acrostic

M ichael is a terrific basketball player. He
I s also a great football player. Sometimes he reads about
C hampions. Michael's friends know karate.
H e knows how to do it a little bit. He does it at home,
A ttracting his sister. He does it
E ven when he is at school at recess. He does it a
L ittle at night. Sometimes he

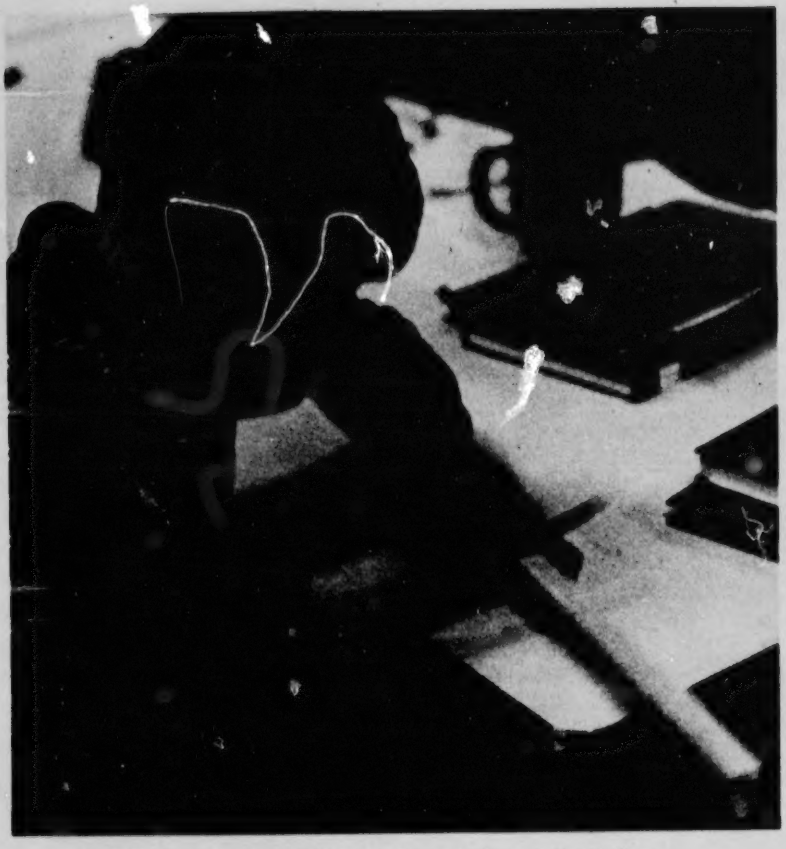
W onders why he does it so much. One time he tried to
A ttack 5 boys in the locker room at the WestEnd House, his
R ight hand only, his left hand behind his back. He
E ven used only one leg.

At The Amusement Park

My mother and I went to the amusement
park. She wanted to go on the boat ride.
We sat together and she put her arms
around me. We went through the tunnel
and saw scary pictures. We got something
to eat. After our stomachs rested
we went on the roller coaster and played
some games. My mother and I had a day
of love and happiness and pinball machines.

Hand Done

My left hand writes words,
"something," "anything,"
and letters, "s," "o," "m," "e."
My left hand writes poems,
all the poems in my head.
My left hand writes
what my brain thinks.
On its own, my left hand
wiggles and wobbles
when I run.



L. Stephen

Making music starts with the instrument. Craig patiently files down the frets of a dulcimer.

Making A Dulcimer

Banging in the frets
with a hammer, clipping
the ends, using both
of my hands and all
of my strength.
I filed the edges
like a zipper
going up and down.
Then I let someone else
have a turn.

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JUDITH POTTER'S KINDERGARTEN

The Gift

Circle, wide as my thumb, rock
wide as a stomach, a heart
ninety-heavy like a bell,
I catch you in one hand:
rattlesnake, s-s-s-s-s-s.
Pepper candy, poison.
Magic, you should be a tree
or a cat's playball.
I found you on the beach,
on the moon-roof at Cape Cod,
under my shoe.
I feel like I'm dreaming.
I'm scared. I hug you.
Sleep with me, black
walnut.

CORRINE SHORR'S KINDERGARTEN

Twig Stick

Like a helicopter
on the ground, you are cold
and magic. When are you going
to change? You come down
from a forest, you dropped
and turned into a grog.
A snake came,
came again down
for juice and drink,
wrote my name, spider,
super man. A fire came.
You moved. You broke into pieces.
I picked you up again.
Bear, policeman, elephant, train,
a Santa Claus, a tree, a twig.

GITTA MILOS' FIRST GRADE

The Purple Boa

Like feathers and a rabbit skin,
soft and good,
furry like my sister's hair,
my cousin Vivian's black hair,
same as all the kids' hair
in my class.
It is a fur coat, a mink coat,
a bear skin.
It is peacock, snake
in a basket,
rattlesnake in Africa
thinking poems.

CATALINA MONTEZ' FIRST GRADE

Con La Poeta

I say my wishes for her:
I wish for money. I am poor. A dress,
a hat, some jeans for Sandra. A doll
for Jeanette. A dog too. And for me? I don't want
hue. I want black. A black eye. And I'll go
to Puerto Rico. And a dog will come with me.
I want a motorcycle. Ramon, Joel, Christian
will have their motorcycle. A rabbit for Abigail.
Pablo will drive the small car. I'll have
a coat. A fur coat and a book about the moon.
I'll grow up and clean the floor.
Jeanette will be the secretary, the nurse
and Maria will be president.
From her window at night, Vivian
watches the moon and thinks.
Somebody else just laughs.

FRANCES LYNCH'S FIRST GRADE

Spring

Today, a yellow bumblebee,
a white bird nodding
at the head of another.
In the white flower, petals
are feathers,
a bird growing
babies, a long bird
with rectangles for wings.
The flower flies up
to a tree, to the North Pole,
or South.
The eyes of the flower
watch the bird who can't fly,
a dove stuck to the ground
like a daisy.

Grade 2 and Grade 3

Caracol

As heavy as peas,
brown
rough, and slow
the salt snail,
caracol,
reminds me of teeth.

- Maria Melendez
Age 8

Funny Marble

A circle as wide
as a button, funny
I have a cool marble
in my bed,
a rainbow.

- Joseph DePietro
Age 9

You Are

You are a rock,
redondo
you, as heavy
as a *pesado*.

- David Mercado
Age 7

King Marble

Do not touch me,
I feel bad.
I'd like to be
asking you
to go inside me.

- Danny Scanlon
Age 9

When I Was a Baby

I used to crawl on the rug
and the rug was soft and clean
and it smelled good,
like carpet spray. My sister
strolled me in the carriage
and I could feel
the breeze.

- Rebecca Jones
Age 9

Mitten

I am the mitten
who people warm
their hands in,
a clean yellow mitten
with a fuzzy cozy look
with a red hat and scarf
and winter boots
in the park.

- Dychell Reeves
Age 9

In India

It was my sixth birthday
Everyone came that we knew.
It was the biggest birthday
party of my life.
My mother made Indian food.
I wore a green suit.
Someone gave me a present
of a bird's statue.
We played hide and seek. We
played tag. We played London
Bridge in Patankote.

- Anuradha Vohra
Age 9

Feather

I like when they put me
in the hat and I like
when I tickle people
and make them laugh.
I am so funny. I like
to be touched.

- Virginia Santiago
Age 10

In New York

I went to New York
when I was 2 years old
to see the Statue of Liberty.
It was big and I saw water
and people walking fast
to work.

- Fabio White
Age 8

When I Was Born

When I was born I was naked
and I was eating baby food.
But something happened
to me. I grew old.

- Fitzgerald Smith
Age 8

First Time I Got Hurt

I was three. I was running
to the bathroom and bumped
my head and went
to the hospital.
I was crying hard
and
got
some
stitches and I will
never run
to the bathroom again.

- Joanne Bunuan
Age 7

L. Stephen

Dimitra and Jessie examine the subtle qualities of a pineapple.

L. Kemp

Nathline enters her own poetry world and begins a new poem.

L. Kemp

Jackie and Tina collaborate on "Singing the Blues."

When I Was A Baby

When I was one
I couldn't talk or walk.
I was too small.
I hurt myself.
I tripped on a big rock
and it was very dark.

- Pamela Wong
Age 7

When I Was Three

I was going home from Stop
and Shop. I fell on some rocks
I started to cry. And my
mother said to stop.
And you know what?
I stopped
right that minute.

- Sha-lu Lewis
Age 7

When My Sister Was Born

I was two years old
I tried to help
my mother.
When she was asleep
I pushed my sister's legs
She almost fell out, I lifted her
from her bed
but my mother got her.
I didn't like her at all.

- Cesar Cascao
Age 7

L Kemp

Silvia, Jackie, and Michael receive assistance from craftsperson and musician Stephanie Loo Ritari in making dulcimers.

Papi

Papi: trabajando y plancha
plancha
plancha

Daddy: working; and irons
irons
irons

- Noel Santiago
Age 9

Mother

She works
putting hair dryers
in boxes.
When we go to school
she goes
with my father in the car.
She comes home at 4 o'clock
and cooks dinner.

- Misael Hernandez
Age 9

My Mother

Working at a house
in Newton, she cleans
the bathrooms
and the kitchen.
She cleans the sofa
and vacuums in the living room.
She cleans the plates.
When she comes home she asks:
"Paco, are you hungry?" yes

- Paco Landaverde
Age 8

I Smell the Flowers, Nice

I smell the flowers, nice
nice flowers in my world.
The weeping willows are gray
over green, see
the sky is little
and blue but still
I like my city,
Puerto Rico.
My mother's there.

- Aracely Santiago
Age 9

Eddie

Eddie is big
We play baseball
and I win.
We sleep in the same room
I wake up first.
We share
milk, juice, cereal
together.
I love Eddie,
my brother.

- Saul Ramirez
Age 7

Yo

I love friend *en* home
yo quiero a mi mama
yo quiero a la maestra
My father is work
my bird is good
yo quiero mi perro
and cook dinner
family
I have a sister
yo tengo mi primo
y yo quiero a mi brother
my Mrs. Rodriguez
I have two sisters
in Puerto Rico.

- Nilda Santiagc
Age 9

In Roma

I never saw a church
like that.

- Francisco Ortega
Age 8

London

I am riding the horse
I see a man on the horse
They ride on the horse
The soldiers go to
the Household Calvary
in Hyde Park
I can see a parade moving
I can see a long avenue,
a horse,
a tree.

- Maria Melendez
Age 8

Victoria
British Columbia
Canada

I can see buildings like Boston
in the daytime. The walls
look green. I see trees beside
the house, people inside the car
carried by horses.
The track is white,
the horses brown,
the sky is nice in blue.

- Damaris Jihovana Torres
Age 8

San Francisco At Night

It is a big city, one
part like Boston, the same
style of houses, too modern
and high buildings.
I see in the house's light.
The high buildings have light.
It is nighttime.
I see a tree.
I will go to the zoo.

- Claribell Mejia
Age 8

A Bell

Charm school bell,
a cow bell,
all kinds of bells
will ring.
Somebody
will drill a hole
in my hand
and stick a nail
in a wall
and hang me up.
I will never stop
or break. I will ring
all the time, for you.

- Stephanie Crandell
Age 8

My Dream

I had a dream last night that
my clothes were all blue and my yard
was blue and the kitchen was blue
everything that I looked at, was.

- Gerald Caico
Age 9

Greyhound

I am a racing dog in
the rodeo. I pass one dog,
then another dog and I
wear a dog T-shirt.

- Reginald Ballard
Age 9

Rhino

I am fighting a goat.
I will have the meat and its milk.
I will go to sleep.
Then I will wake up
and go hunting again.
But this time
I will get a furry ox.

- Demetre Xintaropoulos
Age 8

A Clock

I want to be a clock
so I can have three hands
that go around. I can live
in your house. I can see
everything. I can see you
I can see a bed and hope.
I'll never be dead.

- Rosanna Chisari
Age 9

I saw a stone
it was hard
I saw a peanut big as a crayon
deep as a desk
as soft as a brown blanket
the great peanut
eggshell in the grass
outside
in the sea,
a big boy.

- George Julakis
Age 8

I'll Be A Bike

I'll become a bike right now.
I'll be outside riding around.
I will be taking a rest.
My seat feels wooly,
my wheels feel hard.
I'll be a racing bike and I'll win
a trophy.

- Ellis Bennett
Age 9

Two eyes
in a small jar
light brown
tap tap nuts
peanuts,
eating.

- Muniba Masood
Age 8

In the Nighttime

In the nighttime
I am a stocking
under the bed
reading
a comic book.

- Wayne Shannon
Age 9

My Hands Are Magic

My hands are magic they
make you a rabbit.
they are smooth
they are ocean or
bird. I don't like
anybody hitting them. I wouldn't
like anybody squeezing
them. It wouldn't
be nice.

- Wanda Vasquez
Age 10

Hands

Hands, little hands
can swing rope
can write
"She's writing."

- Debra Joyce
Age 9

When I Fall Asleep

When I Fall asleep
I see three hands
clap clap clap
I see a shadow
fly like a bird
when the sun comes
my hand
comes back in bed.
My pinky
is
small.
It
tastes
good
to
me.

- Regina Cox
Age 9

Violet Was My Grandmother's

Violet was my grandmother's
best color. She liked the color
in her heart. She had a house
and she died.
She was so sick in her bed.
She was dying
and the violets cried.

- Maria Renta
Age 9

When I Was About Four

When I was about four
years old I went
to the beach and we had fun
and me and my friends
and my brother found
a starfish.

- Michael Torres
Age 8

Whales

Whales send calls a thousand
miles away and when
the mother calls it sounds
eack! eack! eack!
But when the big whales call
they sound awww! awww!
Whales are almost bigger
than the James A. Garfield School.

- Joan Silva
Age 9

Fish

The fish is losing its color
The fish is dying. The others eat him.
It is losing its other eye.
The other fish don't care.
I care.
The fish is on the rock
on the bottom.

- Rubin Santiago
Age 10

Memory

When I was in Italy I saw
a little house. It had lizards.
Me and my brother
went to see the lizards
and my family
went to the carnival
and went on cars.

- Xenia Cugini
Age 7

A Red Color

Miss Powers turned red.
I thought her red.
Barbara turned red,
Ellis turned,
all of them dripping
wet paint, all of them
slipping.
This is very funny.

- Derrick Miller
Age 9

Peanut

A dried up lemon
light brown
peanut butter
in a shell
Let me out of your mouth.

- Sandra Lynch
Age 8

At night my hands walk
down the halls into
the bathroom to take
a bath. Then they draw
a poem on the wall.

- Eugene Wong
Age 8

Cornhouse Bridge and the Alps

Clouds, water, buildings
everything is still.
The sky is snow on the mountains
the trees are green.

- Rene Montalvo
Age 8

Grade 4 and Grade 5

Yellow

I'm in school doing work.
Then I shut my eyes.
I open them. Everything
turns yellow, the blackboard
all the writing
falls off the desks, turns
yellow and disappears.
The doors turn small and
yellow, the paper that I'm
writing on disappears.

- Renata Cascao
Age 10

Blue

I look out a window and
blue: cat
blue man
blue boy
everything is
blue a moon and a
blue sun
the blue sun makes
trees turn to water
and a fish turn
to a blue frog.

- Willie Williams
Age 9

Yellow

The car goes fast
door opens yellow
Yellow hair grows long
Yellow people are jumping
clock is broken
clock stops

- Gustavo Melendez
Age 11

Red

Red apple is red
Blue jacket is blue
Green, my shirt, a tree is green
Brown, I am brown
White, he is white

- Wanita Creech
Age 11

Pink As Moonlight

blanket
book
pillow
paper
leathercoat
sand, sandals
tea rose
shocking pink
cameo
flesh
primrose
pink as a moonlight.

- Maira Vasquez
Age 10

Racing Car

Brm-m-m-m-m.
Inside me, white.
Outside, red on the track.
The other cars behind me.
And me in front, lights on,
the steering wheel, nervous
p-um-mmmmmmm,
my brakes loose,
the windows up.
And I win.

- Alexis Mejia
Age 12

Rattlesnake

I am a rattlesnake
nobody will
touch me
I am too dangerous.
I could feel you walk
and take a step.
I move.
I bite you. You will get poison.
I move very fast.

- Files Santiago
Age 10

The Moon

I am the moon
I get lots of air
I love to shine on the earth
and see people walking
sleeping, talking, eating,
little boys and girls
playing their children games
I change everyday from
skinny moon, to a fat,
happy moon. I love the stars
shining and twinkling at me.
It's fun to be the moon.

- David Calderon
Age 11

I am a star
I am a star from another galaxy
Earth people are strange.
I can travel, galaxy
by galaxy, using three eyes.
Three eyes can see the constellations.

- Victor Avila
Age 10

Whale

I want to be a whale,
travel all over the world,
be famous, swim deep
under water and go
to the big zoo.

- Brian Crump
Age 10

If I Was A Dog

if i was a dog
i would bite you
and i would eat you
and then i would bite
someone else
and get away

- Ricky Jones
Age 11

Puppy

I am a puppy and brown
I like to run and play
I bite a person
and keep them away.

- Charlotte Moser
Age 10

Stars

I want to be a star
I could dance and sing
they could clap their hands
to me. I like people clapping.
I want to be a star
I feel something inside me
and I don't know what
I feel hot when I dance
and sing.

- Ruth Santos
Age 9

The Tree

The tree was standing up tall
and I was hanging onto it.
The branch broke and came off.
I went down with it.
A brown rat came out
from under the bottom
of the tree, a part of the
branch was on the ground and I
ran away.

- Kenneth Coleman
Age 10

Bird

I'm a bird who likes to fly
and I
eat lots of bread.
Sometimes I am caged.
It doesn't bother me
as long as I am fed.

- Lisa Shannon
Age 10

Angry Stone

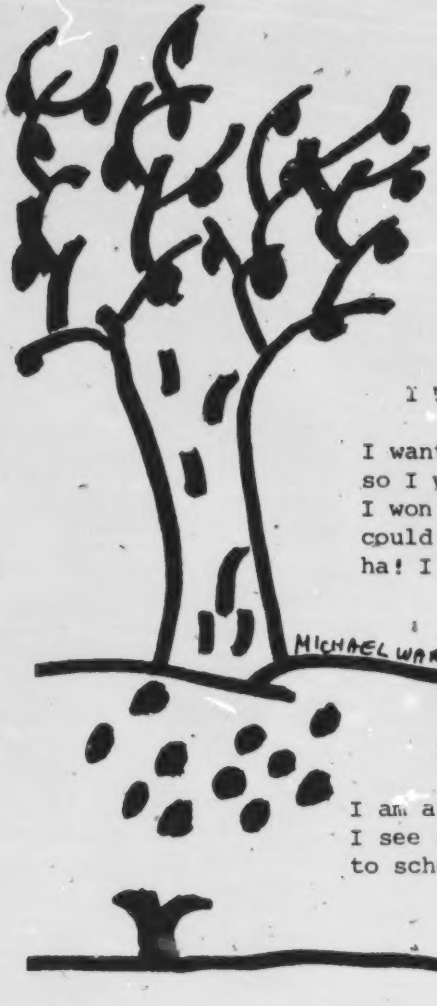
An angry stone,
brown and black. I'll throw it
in the ocean. It will drown.
It will stay on the bottom
forever.
The rock. When it hits me
it makes me angry.
Somebody threw it.
They're not my friend.
I did something.
I threw a rock back,
black and yellow
like a toy.
I threw it six feet high
He will fall down,
and get hurt.
It was an angry stone.

- Henry Caribe
Age 10

If I Would Be A Stone

I would make fire
and they would take me
to throw and to make
hills. They would feel me
and when I touch the ground
it would fill.
I would be happy,
and inside, a stone
It would be hard.

- Luis Cirino
Age 10



I Want To Be Sky

I want to be sky
so I won't get touched or
I won't get hurt. No one
could hurt me
ha! I can move.

- Nicole Burke
Age 9

In A Tree

I am a bird in a tree
I see children walking
to school. I'm glad I'm not.

- Stephen Flattery
Age 10

Lonesome

I am lonesome, a grown nut
ugly and brown
pingpong ball
beside a tree.

- Christina Ivanoff
Age 10

The Beach

I went to the beach
and found a shell and a stone.
I brought them home and looked
them over to see what they were like.
I put the shell to my ear
and it spoke to me. Help,
get me back to the water.
I put water in a can and slowly
lowered the shell into water.
I watched it. Everyday I changed
the water but my shell died.
Water is not the sea.

- Hermino Negrón
Age 12

After a Haiku by Issa

Now listen, you peaches
if any thieves come
turn into grasshoppers.

- April Scott
Age 12

The Forest

I went to the forest in Puerto Rico
with my sisters. I saw a rock.
The color was beautiful.
Red and blue, my favorite colors.
I ran to it. When I touched it
it was soft.

I touched and touched it. It felt good.
But my father didn't let me go again.

- Mayra Alvarado
Age 11

In Puerto Rico

My little brother
was out in the street
and I was looking out the window.
He fell down.
He tripped over a rock.
He was running.
When he was going to get up,
a speeding car came
and hit him. His guts
were falling out.
There was a hole in him.
When my mother saw
my little brother dead
she fell on the floor.
I took my brother in the house.

- Elisio Cruz
Age 9

On George's Island

On George's Island
I saw jelly fish
in the sea, a whole bunch
grouped together and I
threw rocks at them.
I hit one
in the middle and he broke
in half. I hit another
and it broke into pieces.

- Jorge Cruz
Age 10

From the Woods

A wooden thing,
like a peach, soft,
a table
like hunger.

- Evelyn Rivera
Age 11

Jamie's Sorry Poem

Last year, I called Anita's father
white because she was messing
with me. Her mother told my mother.
Then my father talked to me.
He said: leave the girl alone.
Leave her alone.
She's a big girl, a teenager.
She was not sorry to me.
I won't be sorry to her.

- Jamie Lender
Age 9

My Room

At night, I'm doing homework
on my bed. It's noisy.
My sister and brother
keep fighting on the other
bed. The lamp is on
the bureau. The closet is open.
Papers and pencils
are on the floor.

- Marie Santiago
Age 9

Homework

My brother is always picking on me
when I do my homework.
He called me all kinds of names
and I was so mad.
I threw my shoe at him.
It was a low shoe.
I thought it was going to miss
a little bit.

- Stephanie Price
Age 10

Sometimes

Sometimes, when you do something bad,
something happens bad to you.
Me and my friends was playing
in some bushes. We were not
supposed to jump in the bushes.
We got in big trouble.

- Pierre Cugini
Age 9

Lost Mitten

I wish my lost
mitten was
a little kitten
then I wouldn't
have to find it.

- Angel Jiminian
Age 10

I Had a Fight

I had a fight with this girl
named Dina. I hit her.
She told my mother
and I bruised her.
She shouldn't have told
my mother a lie.

- Denine Spurill
Age 12

I Broke Your Bike

I broke your bike
and took your tire.
Too bad for the tires.
I burned them.

- Angel Rivera
Age 11

On the Steps

When I sit on the brick steps
outside, it's quiet.
It is afternoon
and I'm home from school.
Birds fly over the three
family house across the street.
Cars go by. The kids are
playing. And I just stay here
thinking.

- Richard Sanchez
Age 12

The Daydreamer

In school, when the teacher is talking
doing her show, I think
about something else, a quiet place,
a small town
with no cars, the people
sleeping in the house.
The day is hot and sunny
and the ants are eating
sugar, syrup in the trash.

- Adolfo Colon
Age 12

Who I Love Best Is

Who I love best is my father.
He treats me nice and doesn't
scream at me. He takes me
to my grandmother's
where I play with my cousin.
My father takes me to grandmother's
and buys me the things that I want
for Christmas.

- David Laverde
Age 8

The Love I Feel for a Puppy

I love something that has 120
sweetness in it, soft and cuddly.
He giggles with me and is a puppy.
I love puppies. He comes closer
and close, jumps in my arms.
I hug him with love.
Bark bark he says. He means
you are lovely. I am washing
my clothes like my mother told me
and puppy jumps on me again.
He falls in the water and tickles
me and I still love him.

- Marta Rivera
Age 9

My Mother, Father and I

My mother and father and I
went to the hill.
It was windy and the sun
was flying through
our skin and it was pretty,
shining and shining orange.

- Nancy Cortez
Age 10

My Cousin Johnny

My cousin Johnny
always likes to play
with my train,
and sometimes
he breaks the tracks
But I don't care because
I love him.

- Eddie Ramirez
Age 9

Ceiling

I am a ceiling.
My cousins are the doors.
I can see everything.
The floor is very warm
with the carpet over him.
And we talk. I am strong.
The people are afraid at night.
The people have nightmares
that happen over and over.

- Meropi Papadopoules
Age 10

Ceiling

I watch the children having fun,
see them sleep.
I would not like to be a stick.
I don't want to be pinched.
I don't want to be painted all over again.
I don't want to be a different color.
I would like to be a ceiling,
to see everyone enjoy themselves.

- Elizabeth Amarilla
Age 9

Grown-ups

Veo Veo Veo

Veo, veo, veo
¿Que ves?
Da vueltas
y vueltas
z-z-z-z-z
pero no lo se
¿Sera que mis ojos
no pueden mirar?
¿Que sera? Que sera?
Sera un zumbador?
Yo no se

See See See

I see and see and see
and what do you see?
It spins and spins
z-z-z-z-z
but I don't know
what it is -
Could it be that
my eyes are unable to see?
What could it be?
What will it be?
Will it be a hummingbird?
I can't tell.

-Amalia Carrasquillo
Bilingual Resource Teacher
for children

Bridges

I reach out
and touch hardened stone,
a thin little boy -
rigid shoulder pulling away
from my reaching hand
and eyes not meeting mine.

I cannot reach your hands
clenched in sweatshirt pockets.
I cannot reach where your soul resides.
Why do you sit hunched
in the dark cave of your drawing?
Who is the woman, hands on hips,
who stands outside?

Encouragement and gentle scolding,
"If only you would try!"
Daily failure - You fail to reach out,
I fail to reach in.
Will neither love nor logic work?
Sudden softening - I don't know why.
Tentative reception -
My hand allowed to rest momentarily on yours.
Your head hidden less often,
Your tasks attempted,
Behind carefully constructed defenses,
A wistful smile.
Gossamer,
Gently woven,
A bridge over icy walls.

- Mary Patricia Powers
Teacher, Grade 3

L. Kemp

Tina shares a poem with a pensive Mr. Mangraviti, Assistant Principal.

Quietud En La Noche

Llegare quieta en la noche
por no despertar el alba
con un lucero de suenos
prendido, dentro del alma.

Vendre com mi red tejida
por ilusiones frustradas,
dibujando en mis pupilas
mi sed de amor y de lagrimas.

Estara roto mi mastil
por los golpes de la olas
y un fuerte olor a salitre
vendra en el viento y la sombra.

Me ire en la noche con agua,
arena, sal, caracola,
sola mi red, en la playa,
dejare, contra las rocas.

- Xenia

Stillness in the Night

I will arrive in the night
not to waken the dawn,
a star of dreams
pinned to my soul.

I will come with the net
woven with illusions,
my pupils tracing
a thirst for love and tears.

My mast will be broken
by the crash of waves,
the strong smell of salt
coming with wind, with shadows.

I will depart at night with the water,
sand, salt, shells,
leaving my net empty on the shore
against the rocks.

- Xenia
Grandmother of
Juliana Alberti
(translated by
Amalia Carrasquillo
& Barbara)

Vanilla and Cream

All I can
dream
Is vanilla
and cream!

Do you
think

That this
is a
S
C
R
E
A
M ?

That one
can make
a dream

Out of
vanilla
and
cream !

- Judith Potter,
Teacher, Kindergarten

Emily in the Morning

Emily and love
are one and the same.
My face is a smile
when I just hear her name.

Her legs are still chubby
but they thrash with delight
when I enter her room
and turn on the light.

She lays in her crib
with eyes open wide,
so eager to greet me
as night's cover subsides.

Our morning begins
with giggles and play.
And that keeps me going
through most of the day.

- Millie Richmond,
Teacher, Bilingual Grades 3-4

A Postcard

The view is colorful,
peaceful and romantic.

I will like to be some
day there.
O, some place
in Nova Scotia.

- Gladys Gonzalez
Aide, Bilingual Grade 2

Love is Something

Love is something
you can't run
away from. Love is
something you have
to compete with.

- Mrs. Joyce Repta,
Jackie's mother

The Russians Go Home

The Russians go home, with a long trip, and lonely
but we're still celebrating with Mike Eruzione;

The winter Olympics is over now, so soon will be the cold.
The Russians got silver, but we won the gold.

The final game was over, the score was four to two
but who will step the highest? the red, white and blue.

The skates on Eric Heiden you think were almost alive
When it was over he came home all with five.

- By the entire Fitzpatrick
Family

First Fish

He hooked his fish,
first fish,
and in the reeling minutes
seemed substantial
for a little boy.
He saw the bass
stunned on his line,
watched the gossamer fins,
the thick smacking tail
gyrate
in the space between
the sea edge
and his basket
on the shore.
The beige-brown bass,
the gray-green air
and the boy,
squinting his catch in.
Transfixed:
the flying fish was his.

Then the huge fish was cold
in his small hands
and the silver hook, hot
in the red fisheye.
The curved head blinded,
the clear mouth rounded,
alive, spinning him
at the sea edge,
his basket oozing
with the day's death.

Now gauze fins flatten
against wickerwork,
the striped tail whitens
on the sandless floor.
The bands not glistening,
the boy not boasting,
a long salt wail
bleeding
where the bass
had hooked him.

Barbara Helfgott Hyett

(appeared in another form in:
Boston University Alumni
Poetry Center Journal,
March 1980)

L Kemp

Barbara, Leo, and Jeffrey discuss a poem by Wallace Stevens before beginning their own work

My deep appreciation to Barbara Helfgott Hyett, the wonderful pupils, and the super Garfield staff, for contributing time, ideas, enthusiasm, and love to this book. The Garfield has truly been enhanced by the effort and cooperation demonstrated by the school.

Implementation of this project was begun when we all needed a lift. Lifted we were! It was most gratifying to see such concentration and sincerity among our young poets as they delved into their own experiences to bring us this completed work. This has been one of the most exciting activities of the year!

Florence A. Hadley
Principal

Special Thanks

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Frank Carmichael
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Susan Cummings
Mary Dooley
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Donna Hunter
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The photographs in this book depict the Core Group of young poets who worked intensively for three months with the Poet-in-Residence, Barbara Helfgott Hyett.

The drawings appearing in this book were made by the children of the Garfield School.

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Special appreciation is extended to the printer, Mr. Ralph Lewis.